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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to ascertain in some measure the direction teacher testing may take in the Pacific Area states other than Guam and Hawaii. Guam and Hawaii have installed teacher testing programs and have clearly established certification requirements that make it mandatory for teacher applicants to have baccalaureates. The other Pacific Area states have many teachers teaching without baccalaureates. The Pacific Area states include Polynesia (Hawaii and American Samoa), Micronesia (Federated States of Micronesia--Kosrae, Ponape, Truk, Yap-Palua and the Marshalls), and the Marianas (Guam and Saipan). The educational system in these jurisdictions is patterned after that of the United States. Discussions are presented on the following topics: (1) educational backgrounds of teachers in the Pacific Area states; (2) teacher reaction to testing; (3) social and political pressures for quality education; (4) the relationship between quality teaching and educational background; (5) the relationship between teacher salaries and teacher testing; and (6) what type of tests would be most effective. (JD)

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TEACHER TESTING AND THE PACIFIC AREAS

by

Mitsuo Adachi

Introduction

Teacher testing is gaining momentum in the United States. Thirty-eight states have instituted teacher competency testing in one form or another. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) teacher organizations are advocating a national board for teacher certification to make teaching a true profession with rigorous standards, career ladders and the power to police its members. The AFT will endorse a national teacher exam, however, the NEA will oppose testing of veteran teachers (Honolulu Advertiser, July 13, 1986).

Teacher testing is probably the most controversial of the attempts to meet the challenge of mediocrity in our public schools. This charge was posed in the document THE NATION AT RISK in April, 1983. The charge of mediocrity stemmed from the continued lowering of the SAT scores, low basic skills scores by students in standardized tests and a public opinion not favorable with the public schools.

Although thirty-eight states to date have instituted teacher testing in one form or another, there is no uniformity in the teacher testing program from state to state. The teacher testing programs include testing of all teachers, testing new teacher hires only and testing at the time of recertification.

Except for Hawaii and Guam, teacher testing has not been an issue in the Pacific Area states. However, quality teaching and quality staffing are major concerns in the Pacific Area states, especially with the implementation of the Compact of Free Association in the near future which gives many of the Pacific

Area states autonomy and a voice in the management of their governments. The Compact of Free Association in essence means more home rule for the Pacific Area states. There will be less dependence on the United States for funds in the future. However, the United States will still be responsible for the defense of the Pacific Area states. An economic base becomes a necessity for the maintenance of the governments of these states and the well-being of the people. Quality education, leading to an educated citizenry, may be the key to developing this economic base and the success of the Compact of Free Association. With the tide favoring teacher testing nationally as a means to achieve quality education, the Pacific Areas states may be confronting this movement in the very near future.

Purpose of This Paper

The purpose of this paper is to ascertain in some measure the direction teacher testing may take in the Pacific Area states other than Guam and Hawaii. Guam and Hawaii have installed teacher testing programs and have clearly established certification requirements that make it mandatory for applicants for teaching positions to have baccalaureates. The other Pacific Area states have many teachers teaching without baccalaureates. In the later setting, is there a need for implementing a teacher testing program? Why testing of teachers with less than the baccalaureate degree? Why testing of teachers when the certification requirements are not clearly delineated? In actuality, teacher testing may be necessary for the Pacific Area states in their quest for quality education.

The writer is the first to acknowledge that this paper is not research based. However, the writer does have fifteen continuous years of association with most of the Pacific Area states. It is this experience of working with

educators at all levels of responsibility in the Pacific Area states that is called upon to discern the direction teacher testing may take.

The sensitive nature of the topic and the need to maintain confidentiality of the sources adds to the difficulty of this paper. A source may be an educator in a very responsible position and s/he may be seriously contemplating a direction on this issue. However, there are cultural and political realities that must be attended to first and in that environment, decision-making may take a circuitous route, more so than many of us are accustomed to.

Hawaii

Hawaii has taken the initiative to install teacher testing at the entry level. Each teacher applicant pays to take the National Teacher Examination (NTE) tests. The program is, therefore, not subsidized by the State of Hawaii or the Department of Education. The responsibility is with the new teacher applicant.

The Hawaii Superintendent of Education has reiterated in several newspaper articles that the NTE Tests are one of three measures for acceptance of the new teacher hires in Hawaii. No specific percentage is given to the three measures as weights in the overall assessment, however, Hawaii unofficially has associated the following percentages to the three measures.

1. Teaching assessment including the student teaching experience - 50 percent.
2. Personal interview with Department of Education recruiters -- 25 percent.
3. Results from the NTE Tests -- 25 percent.

Although the minimum passing scores nationally are between the 10th to the 20th percentile range on the NTE tests, Hawaii is seeking higher target

scores. These higher target scores have been determined by teams of local validators composed of teachers, administrators, educational officers and teacher educators (see Appendix A and B).

The NTE Tests are the only norm-referenced teacher tests used nationally and have been adopted in many states as a means to establish minimum teacher certification requirements. Each state establishes its own minimum passing scores, therefore, minimum passing scores vary from state to state.

Guam

According to Dr. Ione Wolfe, Deputy Director of Education, Guam will implement a teacher testing program. Guam piloted a Basic English Skills for Education test in 1985-86 for incoming teachers. For the 1986-87 school year, all teachers will be required to take the Basic English Skills for Education test.

The Guam Basic English Skills for Education test is locally developed and contains two parts, a written test administered in a group setting and an oral test administered individually. The successful passing of the test is a requirement for an endorsement for certification. For teachers who do not pass the test, a remediation program will be available.

The purpose of the test is to bring all teachers up to a minimum level of competency in written and oral English. Failing the test does not prevent employment, however, all teachers must eventually pass the test to teach in the Guam public school system.

Guam is also developing a test to assess the mathematics competency of all elementary teachers in the system.

The Pacific Area States

The Pacific Area states include Polynesia (Hawaii and American Samoa), Micronesia (Federated States of Micronesia--Kosrae, Ponape, Truk, Yap-Palau and the Marshalls) and the Marianas (Guam and Saipan).

The educational system in the Pacific Area states is patterned after the educational system of the United States. Textbooks and other teaching materials are basically from publishers in the United States. The bilingual materials may be locally produced. The school organizational patterns are similar to the grade level organizational patterns used in the United States and may include the following: K-6, 1-6, K-8, 5-8, 9-12.

Teachers in the Pacific Area States

Who are the teachers in the Pacific Area states? Except for Guam and Hawaii there is a conglomeration of educational backgrounds in the personnel who teach in these areas. The following breakdown gives this multitude of educational background that teachers bring to the schools in the Pacific Area.

1. Less than high school graduate
2. High school graduate
3. Community College, 1 year
4. Community College, 2 years (Associate of Arts (AA) degree)
5. College, three years
6. College, 4 years, with B.A. degree
7. College, 4 years, with B.Ed. Degree
8. College, M.Ed., M.A. or Doctorate degrees

Although preferences are given to applicants with baccalaureate degrees for teaching positions, the reality of the situation must be addressed. There are other governmental agencies competing for the best available personnel.

Many from the educator ranks with baccalaureate degrees have found positions with other governmental agencies. There is a continuous depletion of personnel from education departments. One can understand, then, the reason for the wide range of educational background and the difficulty of adhering to specific certification requirements as in Guam and Hawaii. A high school graduate may be the only available applicant to be placed in a classroom. Teacher testing, therefore, becomes more feasible in giving the educational leaders in the Pacific Area states a semblance of the educational qualifications of the personnel they have for achieving quality education.

The number of teachers with baccalaureates is increasing in the Pacific Area states. More local hires are returning residents with degrees from four year institutions of higher learning. The Pacific Area universities have been very sympathetic to the efforts of the various states in having their people achieve the baccalaureate degree.

The University of Guam is an accredited institution of long standing and respected for its efforts for the Pacific Area school systems. Guam also has an established community college program. Recently, Northern Marianas College and the College of Micronesia were established. In Hawaii, Chaminade University, Brigham Young University-Hawaii, and the University of Hawaii system are involved with the efforts toward upgrading teacher training in the Pacific Area.

The efforts to improve the quality of teachers, as an example, is American Samoa. Ten years ago, there were no teachers with a baccalaureate at the elementary school level with Samoan lineage. Today, approximately twenty-five percent of these teachers have the baccalaureate degree. Ten years ago, two Samoan principals at the elementary school level had baccalaureates degrees. According to the coordinator of the American Samoa Teacher Training program at the College of Education, University of Hawaii, about twenty-five

percent of the elementary school principals have completed the master of education degree. All high school principals, except one, have the master of education degree. Two high school principals have the doctorate.

About two years ago, the Department of Education, American Samoa, disbanded the teacher training program at the American Samoa Community College. American Samoa then contracted with the College of Education, University of Hawaii, to do teacher training. Teacher aspirants in American Samoa complete a liberal arts program (AA degree) at the Community College in Samoa, then transfer to the College of Education, University of Hawaii, at the third year. Graduates receive a B.Ed. degree. However, new teacher hires are being employed with the AA degree at the elementary school level as needs arise.

The other Pacific Area states have instituted programs that will encourage teachers to complete the baccalaureate degree. The following excerpts taken from the KOSRAE STATE FIRST 5 YEAR EDUCATION PLAN 1986 to 1990 is an example of the thrust given to up-grading the educational background of the teaching personnel in the Pacific Area states. The other Pacific Area states are developing five-year educational plans similar to Kosrae State.

"Under FSM National Law all classroom instruction must be delivered by certified teachers. There are categories of certification...State policy is to have all specialists and principals have possession of a teaching certificate."

"6.111 There are two major purposes for having trainings in the Department. One is to upgrade quality of instruction and the other is a requirement of an Associate degree for instructional staff under the National Certification Regulation. For these reasons, few approaches have been adopted: First, there is the Individual Degree Plan (IDP) sponsored by the University of Guam. The IDP allows individual teachers to study college courses on-island and attain credits for a BA degree..."

"6.128 The IDP Program does not cover teachers who have a Bachelor degree and desire to continue their education on island. Arrangements will be made with the UOG to begin delivering a limited number of graduate introductory courses. If sufficient interest is

generated by the course, then a Masters Program will be set up with an Institute of Higher Education."

With great emphasis given to upgrading the educational background of the educators, one will assume that teacher testing should not be a critical issue in the Pacific Area states. It seems that improving the educational background of the teachers and administrators add other concerns to seeking quality education. This will be discussed under the heading Educational Background and Quality Teaching.

Reaction to Teacher Testing

How will teacher testing be received by the teachers in the Pacific Areas? Based on the writer's experience as a teacher of the teachers in the Pacific Area states, teacher testing will definitely be a traumatic experience.

There is a cultural aversion to tests in many of the Pacific Area states, especially the objective type tests and the paper/pencil tests. Administer such examinations and have each person respond individually. One can almost sense a feeling of despair and uncertainty. Administer the same examinations and have the respondents in a group setting. The responses will be heated and fruitful. Most of the Pacific Area people are more verbal and group oriented.

Pressures for Quality Education

The pressures on the educational leaders in the Pacific Area states to upgrade education are mounting. The pressures are coming from within the several states. The Compact of Free Association for several of the Pacific Area states calls for less dependence on the United States as a source of funds for government operations. This means that these states will need to look at economic development possibilities within the states so that the

present funding can be maintained or increased from local resources. This challenge calls for an educated citizenry and quality educators.

The efforts to establish more private schools in several of the Pacific Area states are also increasing. The private schools usually enroll students with the better academic background who have influential parents in the communities. The move to private schooling is a visible display of dissatisfaction with the public schools.

There are also many parents with financial means who send students to schools in Guam, Hawaii and elsewhere, away from the local setting. This is another brain-drain from the public schools and a message to the educational leaders that quality education may not be available in-state.

These pressures may force the leadership group to examine more severe measures to improve the quality of education in the Pacific Area states. Teacher testing may be one of the drastic measures to help bring credence to the public school arena.

Educational Background and Quality Teaching

The salary scale for the teachers and administrators are dependent on the educational backgrounds established for most of the Pacific Area states. The educational background and the resultant degree attained become the factor in determining the salary paid to the teacher. The bachelor degree is the goal of many teachers because the higher salary given this degree on the salary scale. In-service programs which do not carry college credits are frowned upon by teachers and administrators in this setting.

With greater numbers of teachers completing the baccalaureate degree, the leadership group in many of the Pacific Area states still see no major improvement in the basic skills test scores of the students. Yet, those with baccalaureates are earning much more in salary than previously.

A deep concern expressed by the educational leaders in the Pacific Area states is the commitment of the teachers to the attainment of the baccalaureate degree or to teaching competency. For example, what seems like a common occurrence is the sudden relaxation of zeal and motivation for teaching once the baccalaureate degree is achieved. The feelings generated by these teachers seem more to indicate a "finished" attitude, that is, "I have accomplished my goal and that goal was to obtain a bachelor degree. I did it. I'm finished." Unfortunately, that "finished" syndrome is reflected into the classroom and many times effective teaching disappears with it.

Another concern can be described as follows. A young graduate from a four-year institution returns "home." S/he is hired as a teacher. Because of the bachelor degree earned by this new hire, the salary paid this teacher is higher than those with lesser educational background. On the surface, such a certification requirement seems sound and the professional way to upgrade the educational system. However, let us examine the problems stemming from this new hire.

1. The new teacher's salary may be much higher than a teacher with an AA (Associate of Arts) degree who may have five or more years of successful teaching experience.
2. The competency of the new teacher may be suspect. (Inability to control students, write a coherent lesson plan, etc)
3. The degree completed may not be in education or a teaching field; therefore, this new hire has no prior teaching experience.

The morale problems are evident. They are increasing as more graduates return to teach.

Teacher Testing

Should the salary of teachers be based solely on education completed as presently instituted in many of the Pacific Area states? With mounting criticisms from teachers in service and the status quo in the standardized test scores of students, several of the leaders have expressed an interest in teacher testing to see if, in fact, the teachers with the better academic background really can show that they are deserving of the higher salary. They look favorably to teacher testing as one means to reexamine salary schedules tied to degree programs.

Hawaii is presently requiring the NTE Tests for new hires only. Guam's teacher testing program was discussed previously. There seems to be a great interest by several of the leaders in the Pacific Area states to test all teachers in service as well as the new hires. The reasoning for this posture follows.

With the mounting pressures discussed previously, the leaders in the Pacific Area states would like to use the teacher testing movement as a needs assessment mechanism to determine the actual status of the academic competencies of their teachers. They have, in no way, intentions of using the test to remove teachers in service. However, in bringing quality education to the Pacific Area states, an assessment is needed to strengthen the means for staff development activities that are relevant and pertinent in attaining quality education.

Teacher testing in the Pacific Area states will address two questions.

1. If the salary schedules favor the degree applicants/teachers, are they academically competent and truly deserving to be placed high on the salary scale?

2. What are the academic competencies of all teachers in the various systems/states which include teachers with less than the baccalaureate degree?

Which Test?

Perhaps the Pacific Area states need to examine carefully the teacher testing program instituted by Guam. As stated previously, Guam will be testing in the areas of greatest need for improvement. Guam is also implementing the teacher testing program incrementally--written and oral English first, elementary school mathematics second, etc.

The Pacific Area states can easily determine immediate needs and test to the needs as instituted by Guam. Assistance will be needed to develop the test or tests.

Taking the incremental approach may alleviate the aversion for tests. It will also satisfy the concerns of the leaders about an action plan to examine educational background to test results. Should there be a positive correlation of educational background to test scores, the leaders can then begin looking at other possibilities hindering the path to quality education. What the other possibilities may be are strictly conjectures at this time, however, more relevant on-site, in-service programs that will address instructional strategies may be one possibility. Another may be the whole area of motivating teachers to maintain a high level of commitment to teaching.

Summary and Conclusions

Education in the Pacific Area states, other than Guam and Hawaii, can be summarized as follows:

1. There are varied educational backgrounds in the teacher personnel.

2. Salary is based on educational background that favors the baccalaureate.
3. The bachelor degree places the new teacher hire high on the salary range.
4. Teacher evaluation programs in general have not truly assessed teaching competence.
5. There are increasing efforts to establish private schools.
6. Competency in subject content may not correlate significantly with student achievement.
7. Morale is low among non-degree teachers with several years of satisfactory or more than satisfactory teaching experiences.
8. Non-degree teachers are motivated to complete the bachelor degree at the expense of commitment to the profession.
9. The leadership group must examine the salary scale that uses one criteria, the degree, for salary purposes.
10. The pressure for quality education keeps mounting with the approval and impending implementation of the Compact of Free Association.

There is growing concern and understanding among the leaders in the Pacific Area states that an action program to improve the quality of education is needed. One of the action programs is to give teachers in service the opportunity to further their educational background. Most of the Pacific Area states have started this program by cooperative action with institutions of higher learning. However, there seems to be a nagging concern that quality teaching and education is still illusive even with more teachers in the various states with better educational background. A recourse to assess this concern seems to be teacher testing.

Teacher testing in one form or another will in most likelihood be a part of the Pacific Area states in the very near future. The academic competencies of the teachers may be the major problem in improving quality education. The need to make this assessment is growing in the Pacific Area states as these states assume greater self-government and responsibility for the economic well-being of the people.

Guam and Hawaii have taken the lead in the Pacific Areas in this sensitive matter of teacher testing. True, Hawaii has required the test for new teacher hires only. However, the Pacific Area states may want to study both Guam's and Hawaii's teacher testing programs in their search to bring quality education to their states.

APPENDIX A

MINIMUM SCORES FOR CERTIFICATION

<u>NTE Core Battery</u>	Minimum Scores	National Ranking
Test of Communication Skills	651	25%
Test of General Knowledge	647	25%
Test of Professional Knowledge	648	24%
<u>NTE Specialty Area Tests</u>		
Biology	545	15%
Business	546	25%
Chemistry	531	26%
Elementary Education	543	26%
English	532	23%
German	484	13%
Guidance and Counseling	577	19%
Home Economics	556	21%
Industrial Arts	554	21%
Mathematics	524	23%
Music	520	23%
Physical Education	558	24%
Social Studies	530	26%
Spanish	526	26%
Special Education	550	*

* Not Available

Source: Honolulu Star-Bulletin, June 27, 1986

APPENDIX B

HIGHER TARGET SCORES

<u>NTE Core Battery</u>	Target Scores	National Ranking
Communication Skills	662	53%
General Knowledge	664	59%
Professional Knowledge	659	53%
 <u>NTE Specialty Area Tests</u>		
Biology	680	70%
Business	650	72%
Chemistry	630	70%
Elementary Education	630	61%
English	650	73%
German	620	44%
Guidance and Counseling	590	22%
Home Economics	630	48%
Industrial Education	620	49%
Mathematics	629	69%
Music	652	73%
Physical Education	640	63%
Social Studies	600	56%
Spanish	600	50%
Special Education	640	*

* Not Available

Source: Honolulu Star-Bulletin, June 27, 1986